REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 8-11 and 17-22 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 4, 8 and 10 are amended, and claims 5-7 and 12-14 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Support for the amendments to claims 1 and 8 can be found at least in the subject matter recited in original claims 5-7 and 12-14. Support for the amendments to claims 3, 4 and 10 can be found, for example, on page 14, line 21 to page 15, line 14 of the specification. No new matter is added.

I.   March 11, 2009 Personal Interview

The courtesies extended to Applicant's representatives by Examiners Utama and Hotaling at the interview held March 11, 2009, are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below, which constitute Applicant's separate record of the substance of the interview.

II.   The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4, 8-11 and 17-22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,752,716 to Nishimura et al. (hereinafter "Nishimura") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,300,936 to Braun (hereinafter "Braun '936"); and rejects claims 5-7 and 12-14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Nishimura in view of Braun '936 and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,262,583 to Braun (hereinafter "Braun '538"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As discussed in the personal interview, Nishimura in view of Braun '936, and further in view of Braun '538, does not render obvious the features of independent claims 1 and 8. Specifically, Nishimura, Braun '936, and Braun '538 do not disclose or render obvious that when a plurality of the vibration occurrence simulation states occur <u>simultaneously</u> as conditions that cause a vibration mechanism <u>to vibrate,</u> a vibration mechanism control section controls the vibration mechanism in accordance with degrees of priority assigned to

simulation states, as recited in claim 1, or controlling a vibration mechanism in accordance with degrees of priority assigned to simulation states when a plurality of the simulation states occur simultaneously as conditions that cause the vibration mechanism to vibrate, at a time of driving the vibration mechanism on condition that a vibration occurrence simulation state has occurred, as recited in claim 8.

The Office Action acknowledges that the combination of Nishimura and Braun '936 do not disclose or render obvious the above-recited features of claims 1 and 8. However, the Final Rejection, in rejecting previously pending claims 5-7 and 12-14, asserts that Braun '583 remedies the deficiencies of Nishimura and Braun '936. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that Braun '583 teaches that when a plurality of the vibration states occur simultaneously that cause the vibration mechanism to vibrate, the vibration mechanism control section controls the vibration mechanism in accordance with degrees of priority assigned to the simulation states (see Final Rejection, page 5). The Office Action's assertions fail for at least the following reasons.

As discussed during the personal interview, Braun '583 merely teaches a method of determining which force effects to unload or swap out of a force-feedback device memory to a host memory, in order to avoid overloading the limited device memory and avoid receiving failure messages (see Braun '583, col. 23, lines 31-37 and lines 54-56; and col. 26, line 66-col. 27, line 1). Braun '583 discloses assigning a priority rank to each force effect according to the type of effect (see Braun '583, col. 27, lines 2-5). Braun '583 further discloses that the force effects may be swapped in and out of the device memory based on which effects are more likely to be output in the immediate future, but Braun '583 does not disclose how the force-feedback device operates if the force feedback effects occur simultaneously (see Braun '583, col. 26, lines 22-26). Thus, Braun '583 does not disclose the feature wherein when a plurality of the vibration occurrence simulation states occur simultaneously as conditions that

cause the vibration mechanism to vibrate, the vibration mechanism control section controls the vibration mechanism in accordance with degrees of priority assigned to the simulation states, as recited in claim 1, and as similarly recited in claim 8.

Therefore, for at least the foregoing reasons, the applied references, either alone or in combination, do not render claims 1 and 8 obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 8. Furthermore, because claims 2-4, 9-11 and 16-22 variously depend from claims 1 and 8, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2-4, 9-11 and 16-22, at least based upon their respective dependence upon claims 1 and 8, as well as for the additional features each of these claims recites.
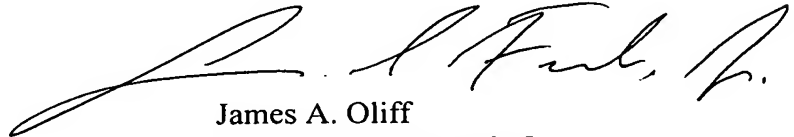
For example, as discussed during the personal interview, none of the applied references discloses or renders obvious the features recited in at least dependent claims 3, 4 and 10.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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JAO:BDM/hjr

Attachments:
      Request for Continued Examination
      Petition for Extension of Time

Date: March 13, 2009

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